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PRODUCTION

ANNOUNCER

ENGINEER

REMARKS

ANNOUNCER: Uncle Sam's Forest Rangers

ORCHESTRA: QUARTET: "RANGER SONG"

ANNOUNCER: Our country is fortunate in having one of the largest and finest public forest systems in the world. One hundred and fifty National Forests, located in 37 of the 48 States and in two territories, form in the aggregate a vast public playground and vacation land free and open to everyone. And recreation, of course, is only one of the resources of the National Forests. Under the principle of "multiple use," the Forest Service also administers the National Forest system to provide a yearly cut of more than a billion feet of timber; to protect watersheds of many of the important streams and about one-third of the water-power resources of the country; to harbor a considerable share of our remaining wildlife; and to furnish summer range for about 13 million head of livestock.

The job of managing the National Forests so that all of these resources are developed and maintained in maximum degree is one of the biggest and most unique public enterprises in history. And that's the job of Uncle Sam's Forest Rangers.

Well, now for a visit to the Pine Cone Ranger Station. Some folks are dropping in, we understand, and it's going to be another evening around the fire-side -- so here's hoping our old friend Jim Robbins has something interesting up his sleeve to tell us -- Here we go --

BESS: What happened today, Jim? Anything exciting?

JIM: Nope. I got wet. That's all.

MARY: I should think you would, with all the rain we had. You should have heard it beating on the roof while I was trying to teach school this afternoon. I couldn't hear whether the children recited their lessons well or not.

JIM: (CHUCKLING) Might as well mark 'em all perfect then, and give 'em the benefit of the doubt. Huh, Mary?

MARY: (LAUGHING) I think you'd be too easy as a school teacher, Mr. Robbins.

JERRY: Not if it was anything like the way he trains his assistant ranger.

JIM: (CHUCKLES) Jerry sounds like he was being picked on.

MARY: Were you, Jerry?

JERRY: Oh no - only Jim sent me out to mark timber for a selective cutting today. Talk about getting wet -- I was the one that got wet.

BESS: I should say he did. And he'd have sat around all evening in his wet clothes, too, if I hadn't made him change. It's lucky these men have someone to look after them.

MARY: It certainly is, Mrs. Robbins.

JIM: Yep, I s'pose we get careless now and then.

BESS: I should say you do. -- But then, rangers of course have to be on the job in all sorts of weather - irregular hours and everything. It's a wonder they gt along as well as they do.

MARY: Isn't it? - By the way, Mr. Robbins, why do they call you "rangers?" -- because you range around so much?

JIM: Well, I guess it's appropriate that way, Mary -- but it's an old, old word. They say the term "ranger" was first used in England way back about 1455, when rangers and foresters were mentioned on the rolls of Parliament. And it seems the English borrowed the word from the French.

JERRY: Who were the first rangers in this country?

JIM: Well, the earliest record of rangers I ever heard of in this country was in 1742 - in Georgia.

MARY: In Georgia? How was that?

JIM: Well, the Provisions of the Colony of Georgia back in 1742 said that "for the defense of the Colony, it is necessary to have rangers who can ride the woods," or some such wording as that. Then, in 1796 the State of Virginia sent some men out into the forests against the Cherokee Indians, and these men were called rangers -- So I reckon we've got an ancient and honorable ancestry. From way back in early history rangers have been men identified with the forests.

JERRY: How about the Forest Service Rangers? We've got a pretty long history of our own, haven't we?

JIM: Yep. Our first forest rangers on the National Forests went on the job of course when the first National Forests were established almost half a century ago.

JERRY: The National Forests were called "forest reserves" then.

JIM: Yeah -- Our job has grown a lot since those days. The early day rangers were primarily patrolmen, looking after protection and law enforcement. That's still part of our job, but the job's been growing bigger and more complex ever since, and now it's a big job of land management that involves not only protection of the forest but developing its resources and managing their use so that they'll keep on contributing as much as possible to the benefit of our communities and the whole country.

JERRY: Kinda like managing a big ranch, ain't it? You've got to build all the improvements, and maintain the tools and equipment, and hire the help, and grow the crops -- and run the whole business.

JIM: Yep, it's a land management job, something like a farmer's, you might say -- only the Ranger's crops are timber and water and wildlife and recreation, instead of hogs and corn -- And a District Ranger is responsible for the right handling of a tract of land sometimes as big as an average County, and for the welfare of all the people living and working on it.

MARY: My, that's a big enough responsibility.

JIM: I reckon it's a good-sized job all right -- one that kinda challenges you --

JERRY: That's the U.S. Forest Rangers you were talking about. There's a lot of other ranger outfits too, nowadays.

JIM: Yep. The Park Service calls its employees in the National Parks Rangers and Ranger-Naturalists. Their job is a little different, of course. And then several of the States have state forest rangers.

JERRY: There's the Texas Rangers too.

JIM: Yes. The Texas Rangers have a fine long history and tradition too. They came by the name "rangers" from the same source. I reckon -- the men who rode the forests in the early days, only, owing to the nature of the country, the Texas Rangers rode mostly the open range, in the interest of law and order. (CHUCKLES) Well, you got me started on something that I can't get a man started talking about his own job and there's no telling when he'll quit.

MARY: But that's just what we want you to do, Mr. Robbins. Tell us something more about the National Forests.

JIM: Well -- what, for instance?

MARY: Oh, anything, Mr. Robbins. You told us about the Ocala National Forest in Florida the other night. Tell us about some other interesting Forest like that.

JIM: Well -- let's see -- Hmmm -- Say -- thinking of these terrible floods we've been having in the eastern States in the last few weeks -- I might tell you about the Forest that was started by a flood.

BESS: Jim, how could a forest be started by a flood?

JIM:

(CHUCKLING) That's what I'll tell you, Best -- You see, almost thirty years ago, just about this time -- it was in March, 1889 -- There was a big, disastrous flood in the Monongahela River basin. It did a hundred million dollars and more in damage. Pittsburgh was hit by the swirling, raging waters, just like it was last week -- Well, when they got around to looking into what caused the flood, they found for one thing that the watersheds of the Allegheny and Monongahela Rivers were in pretty sorry shape. Cutting away of timber and burning over the land time and time again had made a sad mess of what was once fine forest -- So a group of Pittsburgh citizens went down to Washington to a congressional hearing and urged the establishment of a National Forest to help protect the headwaters of the Monongahela. Finally, in 1911, Congress passed what was known as the Weeks Law, to authorize the Government to purchase lands for the protection of watersheds of navigable streams. So the Forest Service, began purchasing land at the headwaters of the Monongahela, and pretty soon the Monongahela National Forest was established - and that's the Forest you might say was started by a flood.

JERRY:

How about the other National Forests in the East?

JIM: Well, I guess that applies to all of 'em, in a sense. It was the Weeks Law in 1911 that started the development of the whole National Forest System in the East. Up to that time the only National Forests were the ones created out of public domain lands in the West.

MARY: What is the Monongahela National Forest like now?

JIM: Well, it's developing into a mighty fine Forest. If you want to see some of West Virginia's finest scenery, you'd better take on a trip to the Monongahela one of these days. You can climb up to the top of Spruce Knob - in spite of it's unimpressive name it's the highest peak in the region - and get a view of a great stretch of the Appalachians - ridge after ridge of mountains. Then there's Seneca Rocks - that's something worth seeing. It's a great jagged mass of rocks standing up by themselves --- a spectacular sight. Folks have a lot of fun climbing up to the top of 'em. Then there's a place they call the Smoke Hole.

JERRY: Smoke Hole?

JIM: Yeah. I don't know where the name came from. Something about a cave in a rock with a hole at the top, I think, where the smoke could go out when the Indians built their fires. Anyway, it's a deep, narrow canyon of one of the branches of the Potomac River --- a wild, scenic place, with massive rock formations. Not much of a road in there yet, but the Forest Service is building one. And then over on the other side is Blackwater Falls - a beautiful waterfall.

MARY: Oh, I'd love to see it all sometime, Wouldn't you, Jerry?

JERRY: I sure would.

JIM: Well, there's lots of things of interest there - but to me the most interesting thing of all is to see the big job of rehabilitation that's being accomplished there -- fine new forest growing on what 25 years ago was wrecked and devastated land - scenic beauty restored to barren wastelands. The foresters tackled a tough job when they started to build up that Forest back in 1911. They had to fight hard to keep fire out, they had to plant hundreds of acres to trees, and encourage the natural growth wherever there was a chance for it to come back naturally. They've built good roads to facilitate travel, and fixed up campgrounds for recreationists. Wildlife is increasing, and there's good fishing in the streams -- But the job isn't all done yet by any means. Funds have been slow in coming so there's still a lot of land that needs to be purchased to round out the Forest boundaries. There's still thousands of acres to be reforested. The Forest Service has a nursery at Parsons, by the way, that's an interesting place to visit. They're growing millions of little trees there every year for planting in the Monongahela and other forests in the region. And of course as the forest is brought back, the watershed conditions that were the cause for its establishment are improving all the time.

JERRY: Maybe by the next time we have a heavy rain spell, it'll keep it from flooding.

JIM:

No doubt it helped some this year to keep it from being even worse than it was. But the Monongahela Forest is only a small part of the river's watershed. There's other millions of acres in the river drainage, and much of it in worse shape than ever from a watershed protection standpoint. -Some day this country's going to learn what we rangers have been preaching for thirty years -- that so long as we neglect our watersheds we'll keep on having floods. It's simple enough, too. Whenever you see muddy water in a river, it means that somewhere soil is washing away from the hillsides, because water is running off too fast, and its clogging up the stream with silt so that it can carry less and less water and its going to overflow its banks all the quicker. Soil doesn't wash away from hillsides covered by vegetation or by the spongy leaf-litter of the forest floor. We can't stop torrential rains from falling, but we can help to control the run-off -- by re-establishing forests on the watersheds where that is the best use of the land, by providing vegetative cover and other devices to check erosion and slow down the run-off other places. We can make running water slow down to a walk. -- Well, the flood back in 1907 brought about a beginning toward the protection of some of our watersheds. Maybe, if the disastrous floods we've been having this year will cause this country to speed up the protection and reforestation of its critical watershed areas, to lessen flood danger in the future, these floods will have done some good, to make up for all the terrible damage and suffering they caused.

(FADEOUT)

ANNOUNCER: Uncle Sam's Forest Rangers is presented by the National
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